



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development  
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## **USDA Rural Development Provides Rural Producers With Value-Added Grants to Assist in New Markets for Ag Products**

**Lincoln, Neb., December 12, 2005**-USDA Rural Development's Scot Blehm, state director for Nebraska, presented Spring Valley Farm and Greenglade Specialty Goat Milk Products with symbolic value-added producer grant (VAPG) checks today. The monies will help these producers to expand the customer base for their commodities through a value-added activity that allows them to retain a greater profit in the marketplace.

"Value-added grants help to find alternative uses for agriculture products and locate new marketplaces in which to sell those products," stated Blehm. "Spring Valley Farm and Greenglade Specialty Goat Milk Products' proposed value-added ventures, if proven feasible, will provide for new sources of revenue to the area. These projects will keep more of the commodities' profits at home benefiting the local rural economy."

Spring Valley Farm of Lincoln plans to utilize their value-added grant of \$29,700 to conduct a feasibility study to determine the local market and overall profitability potential for their possible freeze-dried flowers and food products. If feasible, both business and marketing plans will be completed. Spring Valley Farm's finished products would be marketed through venues such as local farmers' markets and distributors. Long term, access to year-round outlets for freeze-dried seasonal Nebraska grown flowers, produce and other alternative crops for human consumption would be sought.

"Spring Valley Farm is making consumer products that use Nebraska grown produce which will help all Nebraskans," stated Thomas Masters of Spring Valley Farm. "Freeze-drying has become affordable for the manufacturing of finished food products. The process enhances the flavor of fruits and vegetables making products more appetizing due to the minimal processing involved (no high heat or steam cooking). Freeze-dried fruits and vegetables packaged as healthy snack foods can be sold in vending machines to the general public, especially children. Freeze drying also reduces the weight of the produce by 75 percent lessening freight costs of the finished product resulting in an increased profit margin."

Greenglade Specialty Goat Milk Products of Martell plans to utilize their value-added grant of \$18,500 to determine the feasibility of establishing a value-added on farm goat cheese and dairy product processing facility. The legal structure of Greenglade will be developed, market research, business analysis and financial assessment of the venture will be completed. If the project proves feasible, a business operations and marketing plan for the proposed dairy facility will follow.

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Statewide, value-added grants in Fiscal Year 2005 totaling \$1,113,540 assisted 16 producers in value-added ventures. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for value-added projects. Since the beginning of the VAPG program, Nebraska has received over \$7.7 million assisting in 54 value-added ventures.

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